

117TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 6651

AN ACT

To establish an Alaska Salmon Research Task Force.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

2 This Act may be cited as the “Alaska Salmon Re-
3 search Task Force Act”.

4 **SEC. 2. PURPOSES.**

5 The purposes of this Act are—

6 (1) to ensure that Pacific salmon trends in
7 Alaska regarding productivity and abundance are
8 characterized and that research needs are identified;

9 (2) to prioritize scientific research needs for Pa-
10 cific salmon in Alaska;

11 (3) to address the increased variability or de-
12 cline in Pacific salmon returns in Alaska by creating
13 a coordinated salmon research strategy; and

14 (4) to support collaboration and coordination
15 for Pacific salmon conservation efforts in Alaska.

16 **SEC. 3. SENSE OF CONGRESS.**

17 It is the sense of Congress that—

18 (1) salmon are an essential part of Alaska’s
19 fisheries, including subsistence, commercial, and rec-
20 reational uses, and there is an urgent need to better
21 understand the freshwater and marine biology and
22 ecology of salmon, a migratory species that crosses
23 many borders, and for a coordinated salmon re-
24 search strategy to address salmon returns that are
25 in decline or experiencing increased variability;

1 (2) salmon are an essential element for the
2 well-being and health of Alaskans; and

3 (3) there is a unique relationship for people of
4 Indigenous heritage who rely on salmon for subsist-
5 ence and traditional and cultural practices.

6 **SEC. 4. ALASKA SALMON RESEARCH TASK FORCE.**

7 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the
8 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Commerce,
9 in consultation with the Governor of Alaska, shall convene
10 an Alaska Salmon Research Task Force (referred to in
11 this section as the “Research Task Force”) to—

12 (1) review existing Pacific salmon research;

13 (2) identify applied research needed to better
14 understand the increased variability and declining
15 salmon returns in some regions of Alaska; and

16 (3) support sustainable management of salmon
17 in Alaska.

18 (b) COMPOSITION AND APPOINTMENT.—

19 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Research Task Force
20 shall be composed of not fewer than 13 and not
21 more than 19 members, who shall be appointed
22 under paragraphs (2) and (3).

23 (2) APPOINTMENT BY SECRETARY.—The Sec-
24 retary of Commerce shall appoint members to the
25 Research Task Force as follows:

1 (A) One representative from each of the
2 following:

3 (i) The National Oceanic and Atmos-
4 pheric Administration who is knowledge-
5 able about salmon and salmon research ef-
6 forts from the Alaska Region.

7 (ii) The North Pacific Fishery Man-
8 agement Council.

9 (iii) The United States section of the
10 Pacific Salmon Commission.

11 (B) Not less than 2 and not more than 5
12 representatives from each of the following cat-
13 egories, at least 1 of whom shall represent Alas-
14 ka Natives who possess personal knowledge of,
15 and direct experience with, subsistence uses in
16 rural Alaska, to be appointed with due regard
17 to differences in regional perspectives and expe-
18 rience:

19 (i) Residents of Alaska who possess
20 personal knowledge of, and direct experi-
21 ence with, subsistence uses in rural Alaska.

22 (ii) Alaska fishing industry represent-
23 atives throughout the salmon supply chain,
24 including from—

25 (I) directed commercial fishing;

- 1 (II) recreational fishing;
- 2 (III) charter fishing;
- 3 (IV) seafood processors;
- 4 (V) salmon prohibited species
- 5 catch (bycatch) users; or
- 6 (VI) hatcheries.

7 (C) 5 representatives who are academic ex-
8 perts in salmon biology, salmon management,
9 salmon ecology (marine and freshwater), or
10 comprehensive marine research planning in the
11 North Pacific.

12 (3) APPOINTMENT BY THE GOVERNOR OF ALAS-
13 KA.—The Governor of Alaska shall appoint to the
14 Research Task Force one representative from the
15 State of Alaska who is knowledgeable about the
16 State of Alaska’s salmon management and research
17 efforts.

18 (c) DUTIES.—

19 (1) REVIEW.—The Research Task Force
20 shall—

21 (A) conduct a review of Pacific salmon
22 science relevant to understanding and managing
23 salmon returns in Alaska, including an exam-
24 ination of—

- 1 (i) traditional ecological knowledge of
2 salmon populations and their ecosystems;
- 3 (ii) marine carrying capacity and den-
4 sity dependent constraints, including an
5 examination of interactions with other
6 salmon species, and with forage base in
7 marine ecosystems;
- 8 (iii) life-cycle and stage-specific mor-
9 tality;
- 10 (iv) genetic sampling and categoriza-
11 tion of population structure within salmon
12 species in Alaska;
- 13 (v) methods for predicting run-timing
14 and stock sizes;
- 15 (vi) oceanographic models that provide
16 insight into stock distribution, growth, and
17 survival;
- 18 (vii) freshwater, estuarine, and marine
19 processes that affect survival of smolts;
- 20 (viii) climate effects on freshwater and
21 marine habitats;
- 22 (ix) predator/prey interactions be-
23 tween salmon and marine mammals or
24 other predators; and

1 (x) salmon productivity trends in
2 other regions, both domestic and inter-
3 national, that put Alaska salmon popu-
4 lations in a broader geographic context;
5 and

6 (B) identify scientific research gaps in un-
7 derstanding the Pacific salmon life-cycle in
8 Alaska.

9 (2) REPORT.—Not later than 1 year after the
10 date the Research Task Force is convened, the Re-
11 search Task Force shall submit to the Secretary of
12 Commerce, the Committee on Commerce, Science,
13 and Transportation of the Senate, the Committee on
14 Environment and Public Works of the Senate, the
15 Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and
16 Related Agencies of the Committee on Appropria-
17 tions of the Senate, the Committee on Natural Re-
18 sources of the House of Representatives, the Sub-
19 committee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Re-
20 lated Agencies of the Committee on Appropriations
21 of the House of Representatives, and the Alaska
22 State Legislature, and make publicly available, a re-
23 port—

24 (A) describing the review conducted under
25 paragraph (1); and

(B) that includes—

(i) recommendations on filling knowledge gaps that warrant further scientific inquiry; and

(ii) findings from the reports of work groups submitted under subsection (d)(2)(C).

(d) ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS.—

(1) CHAIRPERSON AND VICE CHAIRPERSON.—

The Research Task Force shall select a Chair and Vice Chair by vote from among the members of the Research Task Force.

(2) WORK GROUPS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Research Task Force—

(i) not later than 30 days after the date of the establishment of the Research Task Force, shall establish a work group focused specifically on salmon returns in the AYK (Arctic-Yukon-Kuskoskim) regions of Western Alaska; and

(ii) may establish additional regionally or stock focused work groups within the Research Task Force, as members determine appropriate.

1 (B) COMPOSITION.—Each work group es-
2 tablished under this subsection shall—

3 (i) consist of not less than 5 individ-
4 uals who—

5 (I) are knowledgeable about the
6 stock or region under consideration;
7 and

8 (II) need not be members of the
9 Research Task Force; and

10 (ii) be balanced in terms of stake-
11 holder representation, including commer-
12 cial, recreational, and subsistence fisheries,
13 as well as experts in statistical, biological,
14 economic, social, or other scientific infor-
15 mation as relevant to the work group's
16 focus.

17 (C) REPORTS.—Not later than 9 months
18 after the date the Research Task Force is con-
19 vened, each work group established under this
20 subsection shall submit a report with the work
21 group's findings to the Research Task Force.

22 (3) COMPENSATION.—Each member of the Re-
23 search Task Force shall serve without compensation.

24 (4) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT.—The Secretary
25 of Commerce shall provide such administrative sup-

1 port as is necessary for the Research Task Force
2 and its work groups to carry out their duties, includ-
3 ing support for virtual or in-person participation and
4 travel expenses.

5 (e) FEDERAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE ACT.—The
6 Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not
7 apply to the Research Task Force.

Passed the House of Representatives April 26, 2022.

Attest:

Clerk.

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